

I wanted to bring your attention to the pending execution of a Christian pastor in Iran. Yousef Naderkhani was convicted and sentenced to death for committing "apostasy" after converting from Islam to Christianity. He was given four opportunities to renounce his conversion before an Iranian court, but refused to do so each time. His execution reportedly could come as early as this week.

I am deeply distressed by Pastor Naderkhani's looming punishment for converting to Christianity. As Americans, we believe that freedom of religion should be protected everywhere. I believe a society that refuses this human right is an affront to humanity across the globe. Members of all nations and all faiths should rise together and condemn Iran's clear violation of basic human freedoms. I join many others in calling for Naderkhani's full and unconditional release and am working with other members of the House International Religious Freedom Caucus to raise awareness of Naderkhani's situation and to urge the U.S. State Department to do everything it can to pressure Iran to remove the death sentence against him. Because our nation does not have diplomatic relations with Iran but instead advances our interests through the Swiss Embassy to Iran, I have also requested that Switzerland urge Iran to remove Naderkhani's sentence. It is my deep hope that the escalating pressure on Iran proves successful and that Pastor Naderkhani's life is spared.